3. Feasts and Manners

572 The word compere [literally: pal] is in usage in all of the
177 islands where there are Caribs -- among the French when they trade with their Carib friends, and among the Caribs when they speak in French to those with whom they have become friends. A Frenchman gives his name to a Carib and the Carib gives his name to the Frenchman. Even if he does not give such a man his trade, at least he prefers him to others, and this does not fail to give him some profit. [320]

●422 The Caribs have so few belongings that they are able to carry all of them with them, without having any desire to acquire more.
437 Thus when the Caribs have a tortoise which they want to exchange for a knife, they will not trade it if you should offer them two axes for it. The reason is that they have a need for the knife, although the axes are worth more. Our own possessions, although high-priced and scarce, would have no value among them. [291] The Caribs do not use terms for buying and selling. They ask without haggling and one gives the article to them for that which is offered without difficulty. [312]

511 The Caribs cannot fail to rank as church paupers, and to have the love of Jésus Christ, and to be accepted by the Kingdom of Heaven. For they possess neither gold nor silver and they have neither bag nor wallet, nor coat nor staff, and they do not even have the desire to obtain them. A hut to protect them from the elements satisfies their ambition. Tomali [tamale?] is their stew, and crabs are the
445 most delicate food that they have. Calabashes serve them for crockery, and baskets serve as chests. Earthen pots are used as kettles and cauldrons. When they change islands and when they go to another
574 [264] carbet, drink and food are not refused them. They reciprocate equally to others in a similar situation, provided that the others do not arrive too late, for they save nothing for the following day. [316] The Caribs ask fearlessly, and give freely, when they have something. [273]

574 The Caribs have their accustomed civilities. One particular man
576 is in charge of receiving those who visit. He makes ready a hammock for them if they are important, or a stool if they are common, and has them sit. He summons a woman who carries to the guest a small wicker table which is laden with cassava and other things and it is set in front of him. Then the man in charge says, "My compere, this is for you to eat." The visitor replies with a thank you. If the cassava is unfolded

462 hammocks or smoking, crouched around their huts and appearing to meditate; they rarely speak and let their wives take care of all the work. Formerly they demanded absolute submission from them and did not permit them to take their meals with them. In the course of our trip, while we were passing in front of a Carib hut, we saw a young and strong man walking about calmly, surrounded by four children, the youngest of which was in his arms, while the women of the house busied themselves outside with the hardest work.

342 The Carib dwellings are rectangular huts more or less raised above the ground, with walls made of mixed straw of bamboo or some other wood and covered with palm leaves; sometimes they have over hangs as shelter against the sun. These huts differ little from what they were formerly, according to descriptions of them which the first observers left us, and at that time they called a group of huts a carbet(2),

2. This term has perpetuated itself in the French Antilles and in Martinique one still finds the village of Carbet and the peak of Carbet which dominates this settlement.

of which one was most important, in which an entire family lived. The house of the present Carib chief is of a more elaborate design, and the roof is of wood instead of thatch; inside it consists of four rooms, each containing a bed and chairs.

513 Personal property is usually simpler and consists of "hammocks, "
286 a word of Carib origin used in most European languages. The hammocks
422 are made by the women out of cotton cultivated near the hut; they
352 are braided and not woven, and existed even at the time of the conquest. They were dyed red with roucou, and according to Father Labat, there were some larger than others, called marriage hammocks, braided by mothers for their daughters when they were married, but
415 in which two people never slept together. The household utensils
285 are gourds of different sizes, vases of baked earth and skullfully woven baskets. The Carib basket serves the natives as chest and cupboard; /138/ it is made with the greatest care of reeds painted in different colors, and is so well constructed that water cannot pass through, and the cover of the basket fits the bottom so well that the heaviest rains cannot dampen the contents. Its shape is that of a rectangular parallelepiped twice as long as it is wide. It is very light, and the

11: Taylor E-5 (ca. 1930-1937)1946
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After the evening meal, the short period before sleep is usually occupied in recounting in great detail the day's experiences. Like archery and pottery, cotton-spinning and hammock-weaving have become things of the past; and as the average Carib home possesses at most one bed, most of the family sleep on the floor or on hard wooden benches.

Death, burial, and mourning customs have been discussed in a previous paper.[8]

There is in the Carib Reserve no ownership of land other than the right to its produce and further exploitation conferred by continuous use. It is otherwise with (planted) fruit-bearing trees, houses, domestic animals, tools and implements, furniture, and the produce of various pursuits whether in cash or kind. Children are given gardens, trees, young pigs or hens for their own. Grown offspring are of course expected to contribute as best they can to the general economy of their (joint) family so long as they remain with it. But when they go to live with a wife, or to make a separate establishment, they take away with them whatever things or rights are theirs. Thus, the house and its contents belong to whichever spouse built, bought, or inherited them, and in the case of separation would be so allotted. In the event of the death of one of the spouses, the surviving spouse inherits the property of the deceased, but is expected to divide movables in excess of personal requirements between grown offspring or deceased's nearest kin. Provision-gardens may, unless apportioned before the late owner's death, be left intact to be worked communally by the surviving spouse and offspring. The fact that all children are allotted gardens, pigs, etc., of their own tends to prevent squabbles over inheritance. A deceased wife's parents are supposed to help their widowed son-in-law unless and until he remarry into another family. When both parents are dead, the house and its contents belong by right to the youngest surviving child, irrespective of sex. Other property may continue to be held communally (when the family remains together), or be divided equally among all the children or according to agreement or to the expressed wish of the deceased. The "old-time" Caribs are said to have been "uncivilized" because they never left anything for their children.

Kinship, reckoned bi-laterally, is recognized to at least the fourth degree (common law), and often far beyond. Nevertheless, it is rare that any obligation is acknowledge outside the joint family. Therefore, because this is largely matrilocal, greater concern is usually shown for mother's than for father's kin. The (Creole) kinship terminology current today naturally reflects French rather than native social structure, but there are several peculiarities in its employment

8 Taylor, *The Caribs of Dominica*, p. 121.